

## Mayor's Column for the November 2, 2011 Review

Here is an update on city economic development activity.

We are currently undertaking a retail market survey utilizing the services of Madison consulting firm Ady Voltege. The project will take approximately two months and will include identification of retail business opportunities in Evansville and a plan for expanding retail services for our residents and visitors. Local businesses will be involved and instrumental throughout this process. Implementation of the plan needs to be a high priority for everyone. We are all interested in the vibrancy and vitality of our community.

Also, the Tourism Subcommittee of the city Economic Development Committee is working with the Wisconsin Department of Tourism to consider our participation in their new Tourism Assessment Program. Undertaking this three to four month-long assessment will increase our grant funding and cooperative marketing opportunities. Tourism is a \$200 million plus annual business sector in Rock County. We have local opportunities to capture tourism dollars that need exploration and implementation.

The League of Municipalities Annual Conference was held in Milwaukee two weeks ago. The Conference program was heavily focused on economic development. I attended three workshops: preparing and implementing municipal economic development strategies and plans; the role of local government in community branding; and building a regional strategy for economic growth, a Thrive presentation on the eight-county region that includes Rock County.

I spoke with Jennifer Alexander, President of Thrive, and Jennifer Post Tyler, Interim Executive Vice President of Thrive, following their presentation. They offered to make a presentation in Evansville about their new Advance Now initiative. Thrive, along with other regional economic development organizations in Wisconsin, has focused efforts on cluster industries in the area. I have been in contact with them to begin arrangements for an Evansville visit.

The current economy has impacted most municipalities throughout our state and country. Like Evansville, many local governments are actively at work to improve economic opportunity.

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I serve on the Resolutions Committee of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities. The Committee met at the Annual Conference of the League and considered two proposed resolutions.

The first resolution was to urge the Wisconsin Governor and Legislature to restore shared revenue funding to 2002 levels when state tax revenue increases as a result of renewed

economic growth and job creation. This proposed resolution was sponsored by the League's Board of Directors.

Shared revenues to Wisconsin municipalities have been cut three times in the past decade. In 2004, \$57.6 million was cut and there was a \$23.1 million reduction in 2010.

Most recently, the 2011 Wisconsin Act 32 cut 2012 shared revenue funding for municipalities by \$47.7 million, a 7% reduction. The Act 32 reduction in shared revenue for Evansville, formula-based, was actually \$48,367, down 10.54%. (State General Transportation Aid for Evansville was also reduced \$29,804 for 2012.)

The Resolutions Committee unanimously recommended the shared revenue resolution to the League membership for approval. The resolution was passed unanimously by the League general membership at the Annual Conference. The resolution will be presented to Wisconsin governmental leaders.

The City of Eau Claire sponsored the second proposed resolution, promoting civil public discourse, which was considered by the Resolutions Committee. This resolution was also recommended unanimously to the League membership for approval. The Resolutions Committee discussed the critical importance of civility at all levels of government as many difficult issues are addressed, from global unrest to local budgets. The Committee also encouraged local municipalities to pass this resolution as a show of grass roots support. Committee membership was asked to publicize this resolution to focus awareness of the necessity for respect, courtesy, and decorum.

The League membership approved this resolution unanimously and leadership addressed the critical need for a unified voice in restoring civility. League leaders will bring this issue to the National League of Cities, requesting support from other leagues and local governments.

Here is the resolution language as adopted by the membership of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities:

#### Resolution Promoting Civil Public Discourse

WHEREAS, the principle of civility is the foundation of democracy and the rule of law; and

WHEREAS, public discourse today is too often composed of divisive attacks rather than meaningful consideration of important public issues, which leads to ineffective public decision making, citizen frustration, and damage to our democracy; and

WHEREAS, municipal officials play an important role in shaping public behavior as community leaders and therefore have a special opportunity to help steer public discourse in a more civil direction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the League of Wisconsin Municipalities in conference assembled on October 20, 2011, urges all government officials and employees, political parties, media representatives, advocacy organizations, and candidates for political office and their supporters to strive toward a more civil public discourse in the conduct of political activities and in the administrations of the affairs of government.

I will bring forward a local resolution for consideration by the Evansville Common Council at the November 8, 2011 meeting.

#### Community Announcements

There will be no curbside brush pick up in November; the last scheduled collection of the season was the first full week of October. The next curbside pick up of yard debris will occur in April 2012.

The last midweek evening hours for the city waste yard will be on Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The city yard will remain open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. through November 26 for collection of yard waste. Please remember that only leaves are to be raked into the gutters for leaf collection. Brush and garden debris should be taken to the city yard.

A public hearing on the 2012 city budget is scheduled for the November 8, 2011, Common Council meeting at City Hall, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

#### Community Congratulations/Thanks

Evansville congratulates and thanks Public Works Superintendent Dave Wartenweiler for his able service as Chairman of the Engineering and Public Works Section of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities.

Evansville citizens were extremely generous in their support for the Susan G. Komen for the Cure local activities, including the Jail and Bail, sponsored by the Evansville Police Department, Evansville Fire Department, and Evansville EMS. Mary Beaver and Jill Puckett deserve special recognitions for the organizational efforts. Preliminary fundraising estimates exceed \$2,000. We thank everyone involved in any way on this successful project.

Evansville congratulates and thanks Jim, Jean, and John Kopecky for their thirty years of local business and community involvement. As we enjoy the new expansion of the Piggly Wiggly Store, we are grateful for the many community contributions of the Kopecky family, from the Pig Receipts program to their sponsorship of activities of organizations like the Evansville Fire District.